United Nations A/58/854–S/2004/577

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
20 July 2004
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 37
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 20 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that starting at 10:30 a.m. on 20 July 2004, the Israeli forces undertook to create further tension in the South across the Blue Line by committing aerial acts of aggression and field artillery shelling that affected locations and areas opposite the village of Ayta al-Sha`b and other neighbouring Lebanese villages. The successive acts of aggression were as follows:

- At 1025 and 1135 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Tibnin region at extremely high altitude;
- At 1035 hours Israeli artillery fired three tank shells from Ramta, within the occupied Shab`a Farms, in the direction of the area around Birkat al-Naqqar;
- At 1115 hours the Israeli army fired a tank shell from the Israeli position Al-Bayad, near Ramiyah, in the direction of Ruwaysat al-Hadab on the outskirts of the village of Ayta al-Sha`b on the Blue Line, which resulted in the death of a member of the resistance;
- At 1130 hours a reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Rashaf and Bra`ashit regions while Israeli military aircraft flew along the border;
- Between 1210 and 1255 hours two Israeli Air Force helicopters overflew the Lebanese villages of Ramiyah and Qawzah and fired five air-to-ground missiles at the area around the village of Ayta al-Sha`b and more specifically at Tallat al-Khazzan and Ruwaysat al-Hadab. The shelling resulted in the outbreak of fires, which members of the Civil Defence exerted themselves to extinguish;
- At 1300 hours, flying of Israeli aircraft, helicopter bombing and artillery strafing on Jabal Balat, between the villages of Marwahin and Ramiyah, were recorded. At 1330 hours an Israeli helicopter fired an air-to-ground rocket at Tallat al-Kharrab on the outskirts of Ayta al-Sha`b;

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– The aerial bombing and artillery shelling were accompanied by intensive flying by the Israeli Air Force, including reconnaissance aircraft and helicopters. This coincided with an increased level of mobilization and preparedness along the border on the part of the Israeli forces.

Lebanon, which adheres to the resolutions of international legitimacy, attributes to Israel the responsibility for anything which may occur as a result of its aggressive conduct and appeals to the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and the international community to bring all possible pressure to bear upon Israel to stop these grave violations and acts of aggression.

The Government of Lebanon draws your attention to the extreme gravity of these actions by Israel, which constitute flagrant violations and aggression against Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and appeals to you to intervene and demand that Israel cease these acts and restore the earlier state of affairs. It further requests you to make Israel responsible for any consequences that may arise from its violations of the Blue Line and of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly. Lebanon reserves its right to call for a meeting of the Security Council to discuss these acts of aggression whenever it deems it appropriate.

(*Signed*) Sami **Kronfol**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative